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19 JUL 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Ramparts: John Garrett UNDERHILL Jr.,
Samuel George CUMMINGS, and
INTERARMCO

1. Ramparts of June 1967, Vol. 5, No. 12, pp. 28-29, contains the following passages about Subjects:

"The day after the assassination, Gary Underhill left Washington in a hurry. Late in the evening he showed up at the home of friends in New Jersey. He was very agitated. A small clique within the CIA was responsible for the assassination, he confided, and he was afraid for his life and probably would have to leave the country. Less than six months later Underhill was found shot to death in his Washington apartment. The coroner ruled it suicide.

"J. Garrett Underhill had been an intelligence agent during World War II and was a recognized authority on limited warfare and small arms. A researcher and writer on military affairs, he was on a first-name basis with many of the top brass in the Pentagon. He was also on intimate terms with a number of high-ranking CIA officials--he was one of the Agency's 'un-people' who perform special assignments. At one time he had been a friend of Samuel Cummings of Interarmco, the arms broker that numbers among its customers the CIA and, ironically, Klein's Sporting Goods of Chicago, from whence /sic/ the mail-order Carcano allegedly was purchased by Oswald.

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"The friends whom Underhill visited say he was sober but badly shook. They say he attributed the Kennedy murder to a CIA clique which was carrying on a lucrative racket in gun-running, narcotics and other contraband, and manipulating political intrigue to serve its own ends. Kennedy supposedly got wind that something was going on and was killed before he could 'blow the whistle on it'. Although the friends had always known Underhill to be perfectly rational and objective, they at first didn't take his account seriously. 'I think the main reason was,' explains the husband, 'that we couldn't believe that the CIA could contain a corrupt element every bit as ruthless--and more efficient--as the mafia.'

"The verdict of suicide in Underhill's death is by no means convincing. His body was found by a writing collaborator, Asher Brynes of the New Republic. He had been shot behind the left ear, and an automatic pistol was under his left side. Odd, says Brynes, because Underhill was right-handed. Brynes thinks the pistol was fitted with a silencer, and occupants of the apartment building could not recall hearing a shot. Underhill obviously had been dead several days.

"Garry Underhill's chilling story is hardly implausible. As a spy apparatus the CIA is honeycombed with self-contained cliques operating without any real central control...."

2. A check of Agency records has yielded the following information about John Garrett UNDERHILL Jr.

a. DPOB: 7 August 1915, Brooklyn.

b. Attended high school in Brooklyn and was graduated from Harvard in 1937.

c. Died 8 May 1964.

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d. Was a pictorial journalist for Life, 1938-1942.

e. Ordered to active duty with MIS, Washington, as a second lieutenant, on 8 July 1943. Served with MIS for 2-1/2 years, working on technical and photographic headings for MIS publications, evaluation of intelligence, and enemy uniforms, insignia, weapons, etc. On 9 October 1945 received a War Department staff citation for superior work in military intelligence. Left active duty in May 1946.

f. CIA memoranda of February and October 1949 show that there was interest by the New York office of OO, Contacts Division, in using Subject as a contact for foreign intelligence. Name checks were conducted with various military members of the intelligence community, but these yielded insufficient information, and OO was advised that contact should be developed with caution, on a limited basis, and that Subject was not to receive information classified higher than confidential.

g. On 12 March 1957 national agency checks were again requested on Subject because of interest by the Office of Security.

h. A UP article of unknown date cites an article written by UNDERHILL for Esquire. The article described the U.S. Army as shockingly weak. The UP piece stated that UNDERHILL served in military intelligence in World War II and Korea. UNDERHILL said that he had served as a consultant /probably in 1956/ to an Army coordinating group.

i. A report of 6 August 1954 from the Office of Security, Department of State, concerns contacts between UNDERHILL and one Herman AXELBANK, who was trying to sell photographs of Soviet military subjects. UNDERHILL reported these contacts to the FBI and to CIA. In November 1949

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UNDERHILL visited Washington to call the attention of CIA to certain AXELBANK pictures and was advised that Colliers might be interested in some of them for an article on Russia. UNDERHILL discussed AXELBANK with "Ricky" Haskins of CIA.

3. On the basis of the foregoing an inquiry was made of director, Domestic Contact Service, whose office provided the attached reply.

4. The following information about Samuel George CUMMINGS, 201-178343, was compiled from his 201 file and from information provided by the Office of Security and by C/CI/SPG.

a. His date and place of birth are 4 February 1927, Philadelphia.

b. He entered on duty with CIA as a staff employee in December 1950. He was then a GS-9 assigned to Ground Branch, Weapons and Equipment Division, OSI. In January 1952 he was transferred to the Office of Procurement and Supply. During 1952/1953 he travelled abroad extensively, buying foreign weapons.

c. He married a German national and consequently resigned in November 1953, when he became a career agent in Guatemala.

d. Cables of the 1951-1952 period state that CUMMINGS was then buying arms for CIA and that the arms were intended for resistance elements behind the Iron Curtain.

e. On 17 August 1954 CUMMINGS became the principal agent of the CIA-owned companies known 24 as International Armament Corporation and Interarmco Lt., both incorporated in Canada, Switzerland, and the U.S. CUMMINGS engaged in sharp practises in his conduct of business and was also extremely difficult to control.

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f. A 1957 cable states that a business man in Panama, an Agency source, knew CUMMINGS to be providing information to the FBI and also knew him to be "careful about keeping the appropriate U.S. Government agencies informed of his deals."

g. In early 1958 CUMMINGS assumed sole ownership of International Armament Corp. and of Interarmco. (An Agency audit established the 24 net worth of these companies as $219,000.00.) CUMMINGS bought them with a non-interest bearing promissory note in the amount of $100,000, payable in four annual installments of $25,000, and certain items of inventory which had a cost value of $67,000 and a market value of $250,000. [These items were to remain the property of CIA, and their cost was to be returned to the Agency after they were sold.] 24

h. On 28 June 1961 the West German publication Der Spiegel reported that CUMMINGS had been employed by CIA as an arms expert during the Korean War and that he had cooperated with CIA in "supplying arms to various trouble spots".

i. Shortly after CUMMINGS left his staff position for Interarmco, contact with him was established by the WH Division. This contact was taken over by C/CI/SPG in September 1954. (CUMMINGS knows him only by alias.) This contact is still maintained. Until recently the principal purpose was to dispose of arms, (and CIA made a sizeable profit on these 24 transactions.) The current contact is not operational. It is not based on a project, and no payments are made to CUMMINGS who volunteers information resulting from his extensive travels and high-level contacts. An operational clearance for CUMMINGS' use by the CI Staff as an informant was granted in March 1958.

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j. On 4 January 1962 the Rome periodical Vie Nuove stated that CUMMINGS was hired by CIA as an expert in arms and ballistics.

k. In December 1962 the Office of Security recommended against his use by Domestic Contact Service as a source, and in December 1964 the CI Staff advised that it had no operational interest in Subject. (Comment: As was noted above, this statement is correct, because Subject's activity is not directed by the Agency. He volunteers information.)

l. An Interagency Source Register memo to ACSI, dated 1 June 1965, stated that at that time there was "no record of a current operational interest in Subject."

m. An Agency report of 24 February 1966 cited CUMMINGS as trying to procure military equipment from Communist Bloc countries on behalf of DIA.

n. Agency reports of February and May 1967 stated that CUMMINGS had been in close contact with the BND (West German foreign intelligence service) for a year or more, that he had been given requirements by the BND, and that these included lists of Soviet and Bloc arms for procurement. It was also reported that he showed a BND representative a copy of a purchase order for the procurement of a Soviet T-54 tank, the order having originated with DIA. BND officials have often stated that CUMMINGS is a CIA agent.

o. A form dated 1 June 1967 was directed to the Interagency Source Register by "DA", presumably Department of the Army.

5. Agency records contain numerous references to INTERARMCO.

6. It is noted that UNDERHILL, CUMMINGS, and INTERARMCO have not appeared to date in any press or classified reports of the Garrison investigation in New Orleans, with the tenuous exception of the Ramparts article cited at the outset of this memorandum.